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anywhere, and it was in vain that he sent parties here and there to search for her. After useless investigations, they believed that it was this beautiful woman who had been killed in the battle and had assumed the body of a white bear, and that the struggle signified their approaching slavery.[1]

"In regard to the oracle of which I have just spoken, they say that between three mountains which make a tripod is a valley, very deep, dark, and inaccessible because the sides are perpendicular, into which if one fell he could climb up again only by means of ropes; that below is seen shining something like a burning torch, and it is there where the one who knows the secret goes for the oracle, for in the nation there is only one man and his wife who know it. There are two, they say, for fear lest if there were but one and he happened to die suddenly or in war, the secret would be lost. I heard the story of that secret place where the three mountains are from a French officer, a friend of mine and commandant of the Alabama post. Having heard it spoken of, he thought the appearance must be occasioned by precious stones at the base of these mountains; perhaps, said he, a carbuncle. With this thought in mind he wanted to try to discover the secret. He ordered the interpreter to bring before him one of the two guardians of the secret. By chance it was the woman whom he brought, having found her first; and, knowing well that they love brandy as much as their husbands do, the commandant got her intoxicated. But he found her very different from European women, for he was not able to draw from her any information, since she preferred to die rather than make it known. She added that, if she told him, she would not be able to escape; the oracle would cause her death, and, after death, instead of passing into the body of some fine animal as she expected, it would make her enter the body of a crocodile (alligator), the usual punishment in the other world for those who have misbehaved in this. They believe in transmigration. There are even certain nations which will by no means eat of some animals for fear of eating their relatives or friends, for each nation has its especial animal into the body of which it must enter after death."

The First Meeting Between the Creeks and the White People

This event, of such great, if also tragic, interest to the Indians, is the subject of a number of stories. One of these has already been given, and there are several more of similar type. Kasihta yahola, an Indian of the Łapłáko town, had heard that the Americans were formerly out upon the ocean and at first the Muskogee would not let them land, but finally they relented, and a prophecy arose at that time to the effect that the Indians would ultimately be dis-

[1] [Cf. cat 116, p. 74 -- Analyst]

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"Each square has a black-drink cook, and two or three young warriors that attend every morning when black-drink is to be taken, and warn the people to assemble by beating a drum." [87]

Hawkins probably had the square of Kasihta more particularly in mind and Swan that of Otciapofa. From Bartram we have two different descriptions, one more generalized, the other a particular account of the square of Atasi. The first and briefer of these runs as follows:

"The Public Square of the Creeks consists of four buildings of equal size, placed one upon each side of a quadrangular court. The principal or Council House is divided transversely into three equal apartments, separated from each other by a low clay wall. This building is also divided longitudinally into two nearly equal parts; the foremost or front is an open piazza, where are seats for the council. The middle apartment is for the king (*mico*), the great war chief, second head man, and other venerable and worthy chiefs and warriors. The two others are for the warriors and citizens generally. The back apartment of this house is quite close and dark, and without entrances, except three very low arched holes or doors for admitting the priests. Here are deposited all the most valuable public things, as the eagle's tail or national standard, the sacred calumet, the drums, and all the apparatus of the priests. None but the priests having the care of these articles are admitted; and it is said to be certain death for any other person to enter.

"Fronting this is another building, called the "Banqueting House;" and the edifices upon either hand are halls to accommodate the people on public occasions, as feasts, festivals, etc. The three buildings last mentioned are very much alike, and differ from the Council House only in not having the close back apartment." [88]

His description of the Atasi square is much longer:

"The great or public square generally stands alone, in the centre and highest part of the town: it consists of four-square or cubical buildings, or houses of one story, uniform, and of the same dimensions, so situated as to form an exact tetragon, encompassing an area of half an acre of ground, more or less, according to the strength or largeness of the town, or will of the inhabitants: there is a passage or avenue at each corner of equal width: each building is constructed of a wooden frame fixed strongly in the earth, the walls filled in, and neatly plastered with clay mortar; close on three sides, that is the back and two ends, except within about two feet of the wall plate or eaves, which is left open for the purpose of a window and to admit a free passage of the air; the front or side next to the area is quite open like a piazza. One of these buildings is properly the coun-

[87] Swan in Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. v, pp. 264-265.
[88] Bartram in Trans. Am. Ethnol. Soc., vol. III, pp. 53-54.

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344 [623] cilhouse where the mico, chiefs, and warriors, with the citizens who have business, or choose to repair thither, assemble every day in council, to hear, decide and rectify all grievances, complaints and contentions, arising betwixt the citizens; give audience to ambassadors, and strangers; hear news and talks from confederate towns, allies or distant nations; consult about the particular affairs of the town, as erecting habitations for new citizens, or establishing young families, concerning agriculture, etc. This building is somewhat different from the other three: it is closely shut up on three sides, that is, the back and two ends, and besides, a partition wall longitudinally from end to end divides it into two apartments, the back part totally dark, only three small arched apertures or holes opening into it from the front apartment or piazza, and little larger than just to admit a man to crawl in upon his hands and knees. This secluded [778] place appears to me to be designed as a sanctuary[a] dedicated to religion, or rather priest craft; for here are deposited all the sacred things, as the physic pot, rattles, chaplets of deer's hoofs and other apparatus of conjurations; and likewise the calumet or great pipe of peace, the imperial standard, or eagle's tail, which is made of the feathers of the white eagle's tail (Vultur sacra) curiously formed and displayed like an open fan on a sceptre or staff, as white and clean as possible when displayed for peace, but when for war, the feathers are painted or tinged with vermillion. The piazza or front of this building, is equally divided into three apartments, by two transverse walls or partitions, about breast high, each having three orders or ranges of seats or cabins stepping one above and behind the other, which accommodate the senate and audience, in the like order as observed in the rotunda. The other three buildings which compose the square, are alike furnished with three ranges of cabins or sophas, and serve for a banqueting-house, to shelter and accommodate the audience and spectators at all times, particularly at feasts or public entertainments, where all classes of citizens resort day and night in the summer or moderate season; the children and females however are seldom or never seen in the public square.

344 532 "The pillars and walls of the houses of the square are decorated with various paintings and sculptures; which I suppose to be hieroglyphic, and as an historic legendary of political and sacerdotal affairs: but they are extremely picturesque or caricature, as men in variety of attitudes, some ludicrous enough, others having the head of some kind of animal, as those of a duck, turkey, bear, fox, wolf, buck, etc., and again those kind of creatures are represented having the human head. These designs are not ill executed; the outlines bold, free and well proportioned. The pillars supporting the front

[a] "Sanctorum or sacred temple; and it is said to be death for any person but the mico, war-chief, and high priest to enter in, and none are admitted but by permission of the priests, who guard it day and night."—Bartram.

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or piazza of the council-house of the square, are ingeniously formed in the likeness of vast speckled serpents, ascending upwards; the Ottasees being of the snake family or tribe." [a]

Taitt's description, referring particularly to Tukabahchee, is brief but to the point:

"The Square is formed by four houses about forty feet in Length and ten wide. Open in front and divided into three different Cabins each. The seats are made of Canes Split and worked together raised about three feet off the Ground; and half the width of the House, the back half being raised above the other about one foot; these Cabins serve for beds as well as seats in Summer." [b]

January 31, 1842, General Hitchcock visited the Tukabahchee Square, in what is now Oklahoma, and gives the following description:

"The *Square* consists of four shed roofs forming a rectangle 20 paces on a side within. Each roof is closed on three sides to the ground, the fourth or inner side being open for counsellors to sit in, where mats are spread made of cane for seats. The four sheds are separated on their angles 4 or 5 paces for entrance and egress and they are situated so that diagonals of the Square are nearly upon the meridian line and at right angles to it. The 3 sides of the sheds which are closed are closed with mud and are raised about 6 feet, the open front inside being a corresponding 6 feet. Each shed is divided into three parts by a partition raised only about elbow high to one in a sitting posture. Upon each partition there are two earth bowls about a foot in diameter in which live coals are placed during the council for the grave counsellors to light their pipes by.

"One of the sheds is appropriated, or two parts of the three into which it is divided, to the preservation of articles used in the preparation and drinking of the 'black drink.' The most curious part of the preparation at the Square is at the west angle a few feet from the angle outside." [c]

Another description, probably applying to the Coweta Square, is furnished by Milfort and will be found in the chapter on Creek government.[d] Still another is contained in the Creek origin myth related to Gatschet by Ispahihtca of Kasihta and refers to that town. The dimensions given are greater than those included in the descriptions of Hawkins, Taitt, and Hitchcock. Adair gives the size of the central section of the west bed as 9 by 7, which would indicate that the entire bed was not more than 30 feet long.

344 778

Attention should be called to the inclosed space behind the chief's bed mentioned by Hawkins and Bartram, and also by Adair who styles it "the holy of holies" and says regarding it: "As the Jews had

[a] Bartram, Travels, pp. 492-494.
[b] Taitt in Mereness, Trav. in Am. Col., p. 502.
[c] Hitchcock, Ms. Notes.
[d] See pp. 311-313.

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344 778 a *sanctum sanctorum*, or most holy place, so have all the Indian nations; particularly, the Muskohge. It is partitioned off by a mud-wall about breast-high, behind the white seat, which always stands to the left hand of the red-painted war-seat; there they deposit their consecrated vessels, and supposed holy utensils, none of the laity daring to approach that sacred place, for fear of particular damage to themselves, and general hurt to the people, from the supposed divinity of the place."[84] Later most of the objects which had been preserved here were put up under the roof as was the case in the square described by Hawkins. In old Okchai they were up under the roof at the north end of the west cabin, where the Wind clan sat. In recent years, perhaps to protect them from desecration by the whites, they have in some towns built a small house about 4 feet each way in which the pots used at that time are stored. There is one at Eufaula just back of the chief's bed, one at Alabama southeast of the square, and one at Chiaha Seminole in the same relative position. Tukabahchee, where the busk vessels and appurtenances are kept in a small inclosed space just back of the center of the chief's bed, is the only town to preserve a relic of the more ancient custom.

344 In olden times there was in front of each front post in every bed a stick tapering to a point at the top, leaning outward, and provided on the outer side with two notches. The butt ends of the wands on which the feathers were tied used in the tcitahaia dance were stuck into the ground at these same points. The sticks were called atásá, like the smaller ones carried by the leaders of the women in the women's dance and the small ones given to youths when they were named, and in all cases they evidently refer to the old-fashioned war club (atásá or atásu). This description applies particularly to Tukabahchee. Other towns are said to have had sticks in the shape of axes instead of war clubs. Besides these sticks I am told that on the front of each post on the right-hand side of the center of each bed as you face the bed notches were cut called (t)ná'tásá ha'ki, "made like the atásá," and only men of great importance who could call councils sat next to these posts.

Jackson Lewis agreed with Hawkins in stating that in the old days when cane seats were employed there were generally only two tiers, but it is evident that the practice was different in different towns. Aside from the plan given by Swan the only attempt to represent any part of the square graphically was by a French artist who sketched what is probably the west bed of the Alabama ground in the early part of the eighteenth century. (Fig. 5.) This differs from all other illustrations and descriptions in showing four sections instead of three.

[84] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 88.

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609 619 621 was no direct prohibition of such marriages. Towns did not invite those of the opposite fire to the busk ceremony, although usually calling in some of the same fire. In later times, however, such invitations, as well as intermarriages, have been more frequent. Indeed, another informant told me that a man living in a certain town might be classed as a "friend" by his neighbors, although his own proper town was on the opposite side.

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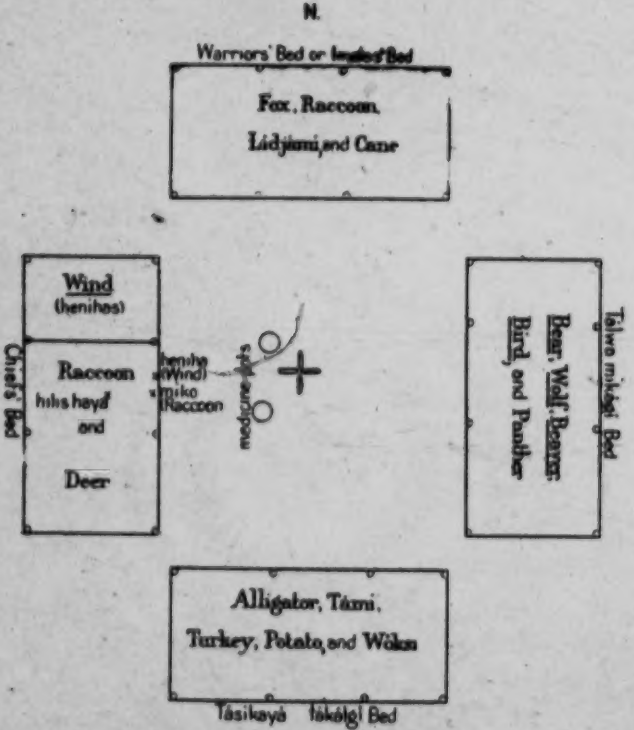

FIG. 33.—Plan of the Kealedji Square Ground (II)

609 619 621 778 Their respective attitudes with reference to peace and war were known to the whites from an early date. Hawkins,[15] Swan,[16] Bartram,[17] and Adair[18] all mention the fact. Bartram states that human blood had never been shed in the town of Apalachicola until an outbreak occurred against the English traders when several who had sought refuge there were put to death, and he adds that this

[15] Hawkins in Ga. Hist. Soc. Colls., vol. III, pp. 51-53.
[16] Swan in Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. V, p. 279.
[17] Bartram, Travels, p. 367.
[18] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 159.

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event was believed to have brought misfortune on the community and to have resulted in breaking it up.[188] Adair says that "in almost every Indian nation, there are several *peaceable* towns, which are called 'old-beloved,' 'ancient, holy, or white towns;' they seem to have been formerly 'towns of refuge,' for it is not in the memory of their oldest people, that ever human blood was shed in them; although they often force persons from thence, and put them to death elsewhere." "White," he says in a footnote, "is their fixed em-

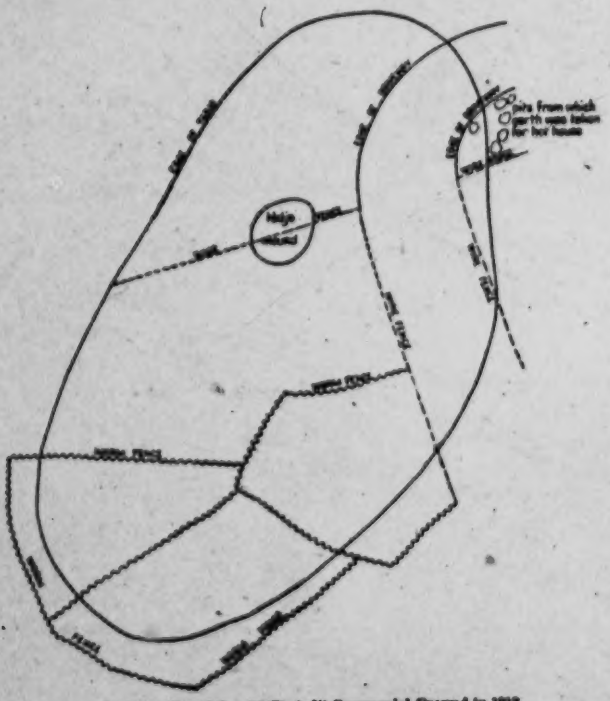

FIG. 54.—Site of the old Eusladji Ceremonial Ground in 1912

blem of peace, friendship, happiness, prosperity, purity, holiness, &c.," and just above he tells us that Coosa, then "reduced to a small ruinous village," was "still a place of safety for those who kill undesignedly." [189]

Few of my own informants know anything about these matters, but one of them reported that if a criminal escaped to a White town the pursuers must stop and wait until the affair could be adjusted. He added that if an enemy reached a White town he was safe, though not infrequently he was forced out of it and killed beyond its precincts.

[188] Bartram, Travels, pp. 387-388. [189] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 159.

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the religious duty of being sanctified for war;[3] much less to associate with the camp in the woods, though he went (as I have known it to happen) on the same war design;—they oblige him to walk and encamp separate by himself, as an impure dangerous animal, till the leader hath purified him, according to their usual time and method, with the consecrated things of the ark. . . .

"The Indian ark is of a very simple construction, and it is only the intention and application of it, that makes it worthy of notice; for it is made with pieces of wood securely fastened together in the form of a square. The middle of three of the sides extend a little out, but one side is flat, for the conveniency of the person's back who carries it. Their ark has a cover, and the whole is made impenetrably close with hiccory-splinters; it is about half the dimensions of the divine Jewish ark, [just stated to have been three feet nine inches in length, two feet three inches broad, and two feet three inches in height] and may very properly be called the red Hebrew ark of the purifier, imitated. The leader, and a beloved waiter, carry it by turns. It contains several consecrated vessels, made by beloved superannuated women, and of such various antiquated forms, as would have puzzled Adam to have given significant names to each. The leader and his attendant, are purified longer than the rest of the company, that the first may be fit to act in the religious office of a priest of war, and the other to carry the awful sacred ark. All the while they are at war, the *Hetissu*, or 'beloved waiter,' feeds each of the warriors by an exact stated rule, giving them even the water they drink, out of his own hands, lest by intemperance they should spoil the supposed communicative power of their holy things, and occasion fatal disasters to the war camp."[4]

In another place Adair says:

. . . "It is also highly worthy of notice, that they never place the ark on the ground, nor sit on the bare earth while they are carrying it against the enemy. On hilly ground where stones are plenty, they place it on them: but in level land upon short logs, always resting themselves on the like materials. Formerly, when this tract was the Indian Flanders of America, as the French and all their red Canadian confederates were bitter enemies to the inhabitants, we often saw the woods full of such religious war-reliques. . . . *Opae* [Hopaii], 'the leader,' obliges all during the first campaign they make with the beloved ark, to stand, every day they lie by, from sun-rise to sun-set—and after a fatiguing day's march, and scanty allowance, to drink warm water imbittered with rattle-snake-root very plentifully, in

[3] In another place Adair says: "But a few weeks since, when a large company of these warlike savages were on the point of setting off to commence war against the Muskohge, some of the wags decoyed a heedless leader into their holy ground, and they stript him, so as to oblige him to redeem his clothes with vermilion. And, on account of the like trespass, they detained two Indian children two nights and a day, till their chieftainly parents paid the like ransom." (pp. 161–162.)

[4] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., pp. 159–161.

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726 778 order to be purified—that they have also as strong a faith of the power and holiness of their ark, as ever the Israelites retained of their's, ascribing the superior success of the party, to their stricter adherence to the law than the other; and after they return home, hang it on the leader's red-painted war pole. . . .

"The Indian ark is deemed so sacred and dangerous to be touched, either by their own sanctified warriors, or the spoiling enemy, that they durst not touch it upon any account. It is not to be meddled with by any, except the war chieftain and his waiter, under the penalty of incurring great evil. Nor would the most inveterate enemey touch it in the woods for the very same reason. . . .

727 "The leader virtually acts the part of a priest of war, *pro tempore*, . . . If they obtain the victory, and get some of the enemeies scalps, they sanctify themselves when they make their triumphal entrance, in the manner they observed before they set off to war; but, if their expedition proves unfortunate, they only mourn over their loss, ascribing it to the vicious conduct of some of the followers of the beloved ark. . . .

726 834 "The Indians will not cohabit with women while they are out at war; they religiously abstain from every kind of intercourse even with their own wives, for the space of three days and nights before they go to war, and so after they return home, because they are to sanctify themselves. . . . The warriors consider themselves as devoted to God apart from the rest of the people, while they are at war accompanying the sacred ark with the supposed holy things it contains." [5]

This law of sexual abstinence accounts for the comparative respect with which female captives were treated by most of the eastern Indians.[6]

726 Adair cites the case of an Indian iconoclast who went to war without the accompaniment of an ark, to the great anxiety of his friends. He has the following to say regarding the numbers taking part in an expedition and their method of conducting it after they had left home:

"It may be expected I should describe the number of men their war companies consist of, but it is various, and uncertain: sometimes, two or three only will go to war, proceed as cautiously, and strike their prey as panthers. . . .

"The common number of an Indian war company, is only from twenty to forty, lest their tracks should be discovered by being too numerous: but if the warring nations are contiguous to each other, the invading party generally chuses to out-number a common company, that they may strike the blow with greater safety and success,

[5] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., pp. 161–164. [6] Cf. Ibid., p. 164.

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ever we can get independent testimony from writers familiar with other tribes. As Adair's account is the best, I have chosen it as a nucleus about which to assemble the facts recorded by others. From the Alabama living in Texas I have obtained a little information confirmatory of what Adair tells us concerning the ark.

According to traditions they formerly had an ark which they took to war and which enabled them to defeat all of their enemies. When they camped they hung this ark upon a tree, or anything else, a short distance in front of them, and if a cry was heard coming from it during the night it meant that next day they would find and kill enemies. If the cry was like that of a woman, it meant that they would find and kill a woman, for the cry meant that the ark had caught the enemy. If no cry was heard from the ark, they would kill no one.

My informant spoke as if the tribe were possessed of but a single medicine of this kind, but there was probably at least one to each town and most likely more.

By the Indians of Tuskegee Speck was told that one of the medicines in the war bundle or "ark" "was believed to be parts of the horns of a certain mythical snake that was captured and killed by the people after it had destroyed many of them for generations. These horns were believed to render the warriors immune to wounds. Another object remembered as part of the bundle's contents was cedar leaves, *atcína*. When a warrior became wounded he called for the *hobáya* to come to him and give him an emetic of the *atcína* which was thought to insure recovery. A wounded man had little hope for recovery if this could not be done."[28] The "snake medicine" is also mentioned by Hawkins,[29] along with a medicine derived from the bones of a supernatural mythic panther, destroyed in the distant past by the remote ancestors of the Creeks. This last also appears in the migration legend related by Chekilli.[30]

Before proceeding to the Creek customs proper, some scraps of evidence may be added regarding ancient Alabama war customs as contained in the traditions concerning their wars with the Choctaw.

The Alabama and Choctaw fought against each other for a long time. They used to take each other's scalps. A party of Indians would come near an enemy's house and hide, and, if a man came out of it, they would kill and scalp him and run off. They attacked on dark nights when the people in the houses could not see, and covered themselves with leaves so that they could not be detected even if the people hunted about outside. If a woman went down to a creek to wash clothing she would perhaps be killed and scalped by a man

[28] Speck in Mem. Am. Anthrop. Ass'n, vol. II, p. 118. [29] See p. 429. [30] See p. 38.

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This last story and the one obtained by Doctor Speck are interesting because they combine the peculiar Southeastern tale in which a bird brings the first land with the well-known quest for earth beneath the waters, a story found over the whole of the eastern part of North America. 773

According to the idea of the southern Indians, something of the supernatural attached to every created thing, every animal, plant, stone, stick, body of water, geographical feature, and even to objects which man himself had made. While these things did, indeed, have certain characteristic appearances and activities which were "natural"—that is, the things normally expected from them—they owed these to a certain impression made upon them in the beginning of things, or at least at some time in the distant past, and it was not to be assumed that they were all the powers which such beings and objects—or, assuming the Indian point of view, we might say simply beings—possessed. The expected might give way at any moment to the unexpected. In such cases the thing itself might exert power in its own right or it might be a medium of power from another being. It might manifest this power at one particular time to one particular person, it might have the faculty of exerting its power constantly, or its power might be brought out from it by the observance of certain regulations. In such cases the response might be an infallible result of performing the regulations, or the charm might be capable of exercising a modicum of volition. 778

An ability to talk on occasion was attributed to animals. Once a prophet heard an owl and a dog talking to each other. The owl said, "People must be afraid of me." The dog answered, "No, but if there is a big stick lying across the road they will be afraid of that." "Would they be afraid of a bush?" inquired the owl. "They would not be afraid of that; they would go around it." "But would they not be afraid if I should get on top of the bush?" "If you do it, they will kill you." They disputed about this for some time and at last the owl perched on a bush in the middle of the road to try and scare passers-by, but in vain. 825

The beings most important in the lives of the Indians or those which, for any reason, were most conspicuous were of course the ones which attracted the most regard from them, were oftenest referred to in their stories, and were made the occasion of something approaching a cult. Still this statement needs modification, since some of their conceptions were the result of evolution, and can not be said to have been due to any apparently greater significance of the objects or creatures in the lives of the present-day Indians. It is even uncertain that they ever were of cardinal significance; some chance association, or the influence of foreign peoples, may have given them 776

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825 778 The origin of the conception of this snake is without doubt to be found in the tracks made by lightning, and the bones supposed to have been left by one of them might well have been those of some animal exposed at the time of a thundershower.

The horned snake was probably held in highest esteem by the Indians on account of the value placed upon its horns as hunting charms. The following account of it is mainly from Jackson Lewis.

This snake lives in water and has horns like the stag. It is not a bad snake. It crawls out and suns itself near its hole, and on one occasion Lewis claimed to have seen such a snake. It does not harm human beings but seems to have a magnetic power over game. If any game animal, such as a deer, comes near the place where this snake is lying it is drawn irresistibly into the water and destroyed. It eats only the ends of the noses of the animals which it has killed. The old Creeks sometimes got hold of the horns of this snake, and they were broken up into very minute fragments and distributed among the hunters of the Creek Nation. These fragments are red and look like red sealing wax. A Creek hunter is always exceedingly anxious to obtain even the most minute fragment of such a horn, because it is said to give luck and success in hunting and killing deer. "I myself," said Lewis, "have at two times in my life owned a small fragment of one of these horns, and as you yourself know [speaking to Mr. G. W. Grayson] I have always been looked upon as a great deer killer." These snakes are very rarely seen.

The Alabama living in Texas also know of this snake, which they call tcinto sâktco, "crawfish (i. e. long-horned) snake." They say they are of four kinds according as their horns are yellow, white, red, or blue.

825 Tuggle makes mention of another snake described as living under ground. "It is never seen, but it emerges sometimes from the ground, with a great noise, and leaves a large hole in the earth where it came out. It is called the Celestial One, or Good Snake."[49] This snake is probably identical with that described by Jackson Lewis, a most remarkable snake, since it consists principally of head and lacks a body. It lives on the dew from the grass and leaves. It swirls round and round in the air and goes upward until it disappears, from which fact it would seem to typify the whirlwind.

776 825 Jackson Lewis told me of a certain set of supernatural beings residing in the waters and therefore called "the inhabitants of the waters." One of these was the horned snake already mentioned. A second was "the long snake," which coils itself up round and round to a height of perhaps 3 feet. This is perhaps identical with the snake which produces thunder. Another was "the great yellow snake," which is under the ground ordinarily but also burrows its way into

[49] Tuggle, Ms., Bur. Amer. Ethn.

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825 to Adair all of the Indian nations with which he was familiar considered the raven impure, yet had a kind of superstitious regard for it.[51] Crow feathers were among the war feathers of the Creeks.

Among the Texas Alabama the hoot owl (o'pa) informed prophets when a death or some other misfortune was about to take place. A man who was fond of joking and a prophet were once out hunting when one of these birds flew near and hooted. The former then asked the prophet in a jesting way if he knew what the owl said, and the prophet answered, "He said another man is going with your wife." Upon this the jester cut 12 long sticks, went home, found that the prophet had spoken truly, and beat the guilty pair in accordance with native custom. My informant seemed to think that in cases of death the owl was the man's soul, but this is doubtful. Another prophetic bird was a small red-headed woodpecker having speckled wings which makes a noise resembling bicici, and is hence called in Alabama bicici'hka. When the nephew of one of my informants died, the wife of the former was away in a river bottom. While she was there and before the news had reached her she saw one of these birds flying about. Adair tells us that on one occasion he observed the Indians "to be intimidated at the voice of a small uncommon bird, when it perched, and chirped on a tree over their war camp."[52] This may have been one of the birds above mentioned or a third of similar character.

Dogs are sometimes fabled to have helped men and there are stories which represent them as living in towns with square grounds like those of human beings. It is said that upon one occasion a boy found a deserted house in which was a bitch with a litter of puppies. He took care of them, and when the pups grew up they went out and drove bear up to him so that he could shoot them with arrows. The skunk is once referred to as "chief of all the animals."[52a]

778 As stated in the beginning, supernatural power of some sort was believed to attach to all animals and plants, and to natural objects generally, even to artificial objects, and when we come to discuss Creek medicine a great deal more will be said about their various powers, because each is supposed to have been able to produce certain diseases.

776 Some mythic supernatural beings have already been mentioned, but there were a number of others, many of which caused sickness. Among these were a race of little people, called by Tuggle "fairies."[53] They lived in hollow trees, on tree tops, in the holes in the rocks, and in other similar places. They were strong and handsome, with fine figures, and sometimes they allowed themselves to be seen by a human being, who then talked about them continually

[51] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., pp. 131, 173, 194.
[52] Ibid., p. 26.
[52a] See p. 529.
[53] Tuggle, MS., Bur. Amer. Ethn.

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776 There is also a bird called so'datcá'kalà which never looks toward the earth but always straight up into the sky. It makes a noise like a woodpecker, and my informant thought he had heard it at times in the dead hours of the night far up in the air.

Another bird is like a woodpecker but much larger. It lives in pine forests, but the old doctors when they made medicine, and had occasion to refer to it, sang of it as if it originated in the skies. These two last may be real creatures, the former the "sun gazer," the latter a woodpecker.

There was said to be a little deer about 2 feet high and either speckled like a fawn or white, but it differed from a fawn in having very lofty horns. This is called "the chief deer." My informant claimed to have killed one of these.

The water king deer (Wiofû'tc miko) is mentioned as causing certain diseases, and Speck's informant attributed others to the "sky-hog" and the "wolf-in-the-water."

There is also mention of the "spirit of war," which appears to have been in human shape.

Besides the above, in the doctoring formulæ and in the myths we hear of a cat-like creature called isti-papa, "man-eater." This is usually identified with the "lion," while the panther is commonly referred to as a "tiger." It is possible that the conception may have come in after white contact, but on the other hand it might preserve a memory of the jaguar which anciently came as far north as the Brazos River and probably to the Mississippi. The Alabama identify the "man-eater" (Ala. atipa-tcoba) with the elephant, of which they had of course no knowledge until late times.

Alabama Indians also told of certain beings with penises so long that they reached high up into the trees; they were in the habit of striking the trees with these and the noise resulting could be heard for long distances.

The monsters of Muskhogean legend frequently trail their intended victims by means of a roller which is spoken of as if it were endowed with a conscious or semiconscious life of its own. It is described in one place as about 3 inches in diameter and the idea of it is evidently derived from the roller formerly used in the chunkey game.[53a]

CHARMS

•778 789 Among these objects, which are rather means of securing supernatural help than active helpers themselves, the sabîa were the most important, and they are said to be known to all of the Five Civilized Tribes. I have heard of them personally among the Creeks, Alabama, and Natchez. They were very small objects looking like crystals and when properly treated would bring the possessor success in any

[53a] See p. 486 in the preceding paper.

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emergency of life, in public speaking and in war, but particularly in hunting and in love. If the owner of a sabĭa asked for a thing he would never be refused. The Texas Alabama claim that with them it was only a love charm and had nothing to do with hunting. However, it was a saying that anything that will charm a deer will charm a woman. The word is said to convey the impression of a group of men starting off carrying some particular article, but its origin may have had nothing to do with this. The best account of it was obtained from Jackson Lewis, and in substance it is as follows:

There are different kinds of sabĭa—white, blue, red, yellow, and one that is nearly black. All have a luster like that of glass except the black, which looks like the graphite of a lead pencil. The red and yellow sabĭa are considered the strong ones or the males; the white and blue are the females. If one sits down and watches them a moment they gleam and flash as if they were live things moving about. Lewis owned a white sabĭa and also a blue one for a long time but sold them when he partially lost his eyesight. Upon one occasion he took one of these out, laid it upon the table, and was about to touch it with the point of his penknife when it sprang off to a distance of 2 or 3 feet like a thing alive. According to tradition sabĭa and the knowledge of how they should be used came from the Yamasee, so that in singing the long song which goes with them, but is not used much on account of its sacredness, the word Yamasee continually occurs. The sabĭa was kept in a little piece of buckskin along with red paint, and when a man went out hunting he opened this up, took a little red paint out on the end of a match or straw, and put it on his cheek. Then the deer did not seem wild and there was little trouble experienced in finding and shooting them. This is not done until one has gotten a little distance from camp, and the action is accompanied by a song intended to make the deer approach. Another song may be sung to blind the deer after one has seen him so that you can get as near to him as possible before shooting. During the sabĭa songs the charm itself is not unwrapped. Some sabĭa now in use are said to have been obtained from the Yamasee, while others are reputed to have been borne upon a plant which grows in out-of-the-way places. This plant has minute seeds which fall off when they are ripe and form such crystals. Numerous songs were connected with this charm, and it is said that "one could never finish telling the myths concerning it." Sometimes a sabĭa is found whirling around on gravelly or sandy soil and acting as if it were alive

Another man, who claimed merely to have seen imitations of the yellow and blue varieties but not the true sabĭa, said that they were so powerful that the owner would not keep one in the house. It was put in the middle of a circular piece of buckskin taken from the flank of a deer and tied up tight until it was to be used. When a

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hunter having one of these failed to kill a deer and the sun was already high in the heavens he untied this charm and held it in his hand so that the rays of the sun might fall upon it. Then he sang a song to it which made it wriggle in the paint. Forthwith the deer would be charmed and would sometimes come straight toward the hunter. This man, it is to be noted, differs from Jackson Lewis regarding the unwrapping of the sabĭa. He was less likely to be correct, but on the other hand there were probably many different ways of treatment.

Cook said that unless it is carefully handled and controlled by the right formula the sabĭa will injure its owner by exciting him "sexually" or affecting his wife and daughters in the same manner. Therefore it was generally not carried on the person unless its owner was ready for an emergency and had his formula constantly in mind, which makes it entirely safe. It is easily lost, and will jump away quickly. The roots of the sabĭa hâlgi ("sabĭa wife") were also used as a charm. This is one of the first plants to come out in spring. These charms are still in use, being employed largely as love charms.

Still another informant suggested that the "fox fire" sometimes seen in punk perhaps originated the sabĭa idea; the phosphorescent light was associated with the daylight luster of these crystals and hence supposed to be self-derived—i. e., the result of a volitional act on the part of the stone. The following account of the plant and mineral sabĭas is from the Tuggle collection:

"A man once went to the woods and remained in solitary meditation for four days. He wandered alone till he heard a soft, low, sweet voice, singing a song. He listened and watched. He saw a beautiful little flower, swaying gracefully back and forth. He knew the song came from the little flower. Around the flower the ground was swept clean. He listened until he had learned the song. Suddenly he felt that he possessed a wonderful power, which he could impart to any object. Any one who had such an object in his possession became lucky. He could succeed in love, in the chase, and in war. Often bits of stone possess this power. The color of these charmed stones is white, red, and yellow. They are called 'Sar-pee-yah.'" [84]

One of the vegetable sabĭas was called sabĭa hagi ("like a sabĭa"). It has a globular root and a white flower, said to be the first flower to appear in spring. When a man discovered such a plant he set up a stake near by to mark it so that he could dig it up when it got big enough. That time having arrived, the prospective owner went to the river and dived into it four times. Then he procured a piece of white buckskin, put some red paint on this, and placed the root on the paint. It was then laid away carefully in a secure, dry place

[84] Tuggle, Ms., Bur. Amer. Ethn.

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away from the house, for if it were in the latter place the whole family would go wild and act like deer at the rutting season. When the owner wanted to go hunting he took a little paint from around the root and put it on his face, and if he were going far the whole charm could be carried along.

Another sabĭa was known as sabĭa hàtki ("white sabĭa").* It has small leaves and a bunch of black berries at the top, and grows to the height of about 1½ feet. If a man chewed a little of this when he was out hunting he would immediately encounter a deer. It also had power to attract women.

The sabĭa crystal was, at least by some, believed to come from a plant. This is shown by the following account of this charm taken down by Mr. G. W. Grayson from an Indian doctor, Caley Proctor, the use of which has been kindly allowed me by Mr. Grayson's family.

"The subbea is often found in the bulb of a rare plant. The plant is never found growing abundantly in any locality. It is pulled from the ground and from the bulb is stripped off each outer coating until the center is reached when there will be found something, a very small piece of broken glass, red, amber, or of some other color. It is taken out and put into a small quantity of red paint, and the whole is securely wrapped in a small piece of white dressed buckskin. This is the famous subbea, especially useful in giving luck to hunters who know the song and sing it to the enclosed subbea, or success to him who desires to win the affections of one of the opposite sex."

Jackson Lewis had heard of two other roots used by the Creeks in hunting, though they were not spoken of as sabĭas. One he had never seen. The other was a very small plant with a very small bulbous root. The root is rubbed over the eyelashes two ways, horizontally and vertically, when it produces success in hunting. If one has had bad or inauspicious dreams during the night and does not feel encouraged to go out hunting these bulbs will free him of this feeling and "set him up" for the day.

A third root had been obtained from the wild tribes of the west. If one made lines with this one on the face and hands and a straight mark on the bottom of the foot he would have good luck. It would also stop nosebleed. The western Indians claim that when they administer it to a horse about to run a race the horse always wins. Jackson Lewis himself once had a piece of this medicine and testified to its power.

As a charm against snake bite they hung the thigh bone of the highland terrapin about the necks of children.

Adair speaks of a beaded string of bison hair which Indian women tied around their legs as "a great ornament, as well as a preservative against miscarriages, hard labor, and other evils."[55]

* Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 180.

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778 789 When a nail or some similar object was run into the body the red-headed woodpecker called tĭtka was used as a charm to get it out. The "ark" which they carried to war was another kind of charm. When they defeated the French under D'Artaguette they insisted on killing the priests because they believed the articles for the performance of the mass which the latter carried were the French ark and the priests its keepers.[56]

A piece of the horn of a horned snake was one of the greatest charms. Some men claimed that they had been able to charm such a snake by their songs so as to bring it to the bank of the stream, when they obtained a piece of one of its horns. This was kept in a hollow tree or some other place remote from the house lest it should make the children sick.[56a]

An Alabama hunter carried a piece of the root of the wâtola imbâkca ("crane's cord") in his ball pouch, and if he could not find deer he would sing and talk to it, blow upon it, and then chew it. Then he was sure to find and kill the animals.

Bartram speaks of the "physic-nut, or Indian olive" as similarly used, and says: "The Indians when they go in pursuit of deer carry this fruit with them, supposing that it has the power of charming or drawing that creature to them."[57] Although the identification is a little uncertain this seems to be the fruit of the *Triosteum perfoliatum* or "horse gentian."

The early white traders were often so affected by native superstitions regarding charms that they placed unbounded confidence in them themselves. Thus Adair says that he took the foot of a "guinea deer" out of the shot pouch of one of these men "and another from my own partner, which they had very safely sewed in the corner of each of their otter-skin pouches, to enable them, according to the Indian creed, to kill deer, bear, buffalo, beaver, and other wild beasts in plenty." Argument proving unavailing he was constrained to return them to their owners lest an accident might befall them and the blame be laid upon him.[58]

[781] At times, it would seem, an Indian would turn upon his charm and throw it away if it did not appear to him to be sufficiently active in his behalf. Adair mentions a case in which an Upper Creek Indian burned himself so badly in the fire when under the influence of liquor that he became furiously angry with it, upbraiding it for its treatment of him after all of the food he had given it. It is added that from then on he became godless, though perhaps only with respect to that particular element. Adair says that he had witnessed several instances of "impiety" of like nature.[59]

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[56] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., pp. 154–155. See pp. 411–412, 425.
[56a] See p. 429.
[57] Bartram, Travels, p. 41.
[58] Adair, op. cit., p. 239.
[59] Ibid., p. 116. Also see p. 484.

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Magical songs or formulas accompanied the use of most medicines and charms, and very wonderful things were supposed to be accomplished by these. "By a word" a man could stand aside in the war-path and render himself invisible to the enemies. "By a word" a man could even condense the whole world in such a way that he could go around it in four steps. A certain Indian in recent times "conjured" his field and sprinkled it with miko hoyanīdja, and, "while the crops all about were ruined, he had a good harvest."

Tribal medicines or palladia such as are often met with in other parts of America were almost unknown to the Creeks unless we include the "ark" or war medicine under this head. Adair and some later writers mention a human figure carved out of wood in one of the upper towns,[80] and I myself was told of a wooden eagle with drops of blood represented issuing from the corners of its mouth which was brought out and planted in front of the miko's bed at Coweta when anything of importance was to be discussed. The Creek chief James Islands spoke of articles used by various towns during the celebration of the busk and held in great reverence, and he instanced large conch shells out of which the Coweta Indians took their black drink. These, he said, they had had for a long time and preserved with great care. But there is no certainty that these things were really palladia. Nevertheless, there is one apparent exception, the famous copper and brass plates preserved by the town of Tukabahchee. Hitchcock says that, in his time, these were kept in a small house which stood by itself tightly shut up, situated near the tcokofa, but at a later period, and apparently at an earlier one also, they were in the sanctuary behind the middle section of the Chiefs' bed. The small detached houses, such as Hitchcock describes, were built in several of the square grounds and I have seen some of them, but I was given to understand that they represented a recent institution, being used probably as a protection against the all-consuming curiosity of the white man. The plates were brought out once annually at the time of the busk and formed the principal feature in one of their dances to be described presently. The first account of them that has come down to us is by, or rather through, Adair and is of the utmost importance. It runs as follows:

"In the Tuccabatches on the Tallapoose river, thirty miles above the Allabahamah garrison, are two brazen tablets, and five of copper. They esteem them so sacred as to keep them constantly in their holy of holies, without touching them in the least, only in the time of their compounded first-fruit-offerings, and annual expiation of sins; at which season, their magus carries one under his arm, a-head of the people, dancing round the sacred arbour; next to him their head-warrior carries another; and those warriors who chuse it,

[80] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., pp. 22-23.

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778 carry the rest after the manner of the high priest; all the others carry white canes with swan-feathers at the top. Hearing accidentally of these important monuments of antiquity, and enquiring pretty much about them, I was certified of the truth of the report by four of the southern traders, at the most eminent Indian trading house of all English America. One of the gentlemen informed me, that at my request he endeavoured to get a liberty of viewing the aforesaid tables, but it could not possibly be obtained, only in the time of the yearly grand sacrifice, for fear of polluting their holy things, at which time gentlemen of curiosity may see them. *Old Bracket*, an Indian of perhaps 100 years old, lives in that old beloved town, who gave the following description of them:

"*Old Bracket's* account of the *five copper* and *two brass* plates under the beloved cabbin in Tuccabatchey-square.

The shape of the five copper plates; one is a foot and a half long and seven inches wide, the other four are shorter and narrower.

The largest stamped thus: The shape of the two brass plates,—about a foot and a half in diameter.

"He said he was told by his forefathers that those plates were given to them by the man we call God; that there had been more of other shapes, some as long as he could stretch with both his arms, and some had writing upon them which were buried with particular men; and that they had instructions given with them, viz. they must only be handled by particular people, and those fasting; and no unclean woman must be suffered to come near them or the place where they are deposited. He said, none but this town's people had any such plates given them, and that they were a different people from the Creeks. He only remembered three more, which were buried with three of his family, and he was the only man of the family now left. He said, there were two copper plates under the king's cabin, which had lain there from the first settling of the town.

"This account was taken in the Tuccabatchey-square, 27th July, 1759, per Will. Bolsover." [41]

Swan, writing in 1791, mentions them again in these words:

"There are preserved in the Tuckabatches' town, on the Tallapoosee river, some thin pieces of wrought brass, found in the earth when the Indians first dug for clay to build in this place. Nobody can tell how long since they were dug up; but the Indians preserve them as proofs of their right to the ground, having descended to them by their departed ancestors, from time immemorial." [42]

[41] Note in Adair, pp. 178–179. [42] Swan in Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. v, p. 283.

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If Swan means that the plates had been dug up at the place where the Tukabahchee then were he is in error, since the tribe had occupied that place probably not a hundred years. He may have been led into a misunderstanding owing to the fact that some of them were buried in the earth, under the Chiefs' bed.[63] Pickett gives the following account of the ceremony observed in carrying them beyond the Mississippi at the time of the Creek removal:

"When the inhabitants of this town, in the autumn of 1836, took up the line of march for their present home in the Arkansas Territory, these plates were transported thence by six Indians, remarkable for their sobriety and moral character, at the head of whom was the Chief, Spoke-oak, Micco [Ispokōgi miko].[64] Medicine, made expressly for their safe transportation, was carried along by these warriors. Each one had a plate strapped behind his back, enveloped nicely in buckskin. They carried nothing else, but marched on, one before the other, the whole distance to Arkansas, neither communicating nor conversing with a soul but themselves, although several thousands were emigrating in company; and walking, with a solemn religious air, one mile in advance of the others."[65] As to their origin he says:

"Another tradition is, that the Shawnees gave these plates to the Tookabatchas, as tokens of their friendship, with an injunction that they would annually introduce them in their religious observances of the new corn season. But the opinion of Opothleoholo, one of the most gifted of the modern Creeks, went to corroborate the general tradition that they were gifts from the Great Spirit." [66]

Most of this information was obtained from Barent Dubois, whom Pickett describes as "an intelligent New Englander" [66] but Schoolcraft terms a citizen of New York.[67] There is no doubt of its substantial accuracy. What he says regarding the manner of transporting the plates west is confirmed by General Hitchcock on the authority of a half-breed Creek chief who told him that "when the general emigration took place in 1836 a number of people were selected to convey those articles to the west and they went in advance of the nation. No man was allowed to precede the party in charge of those articles." [67a]

Schoolcraft includes a particular account of the plates in the third volume of his great work, and adds a little information which we may infer from the context was obtained from Walter Lowrie, Esq., president of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, who

[63] See p. 504.
[64] This was not the town chief but a chief who seems to have had peculiar priestly functions. See p. 66.
[65] Pickett, Hist. Ala., vol. i, pp. 56-57. Charleston, 1851.
[66] Ibid., p. 57.
[67] Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. iii, p. 90.
[67a] Hitchcock, Ms. notes.

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•778 examined them in the Choctaw country in 1852. According to this statement "Muscogee tradition affirms that there were more of these plates possessed by them at former periods, of different kinds, some of which had letters or figures, but that the number was diminished by the custom of placing one or more of them with the body of a deceased chief of the pure or reigning blood. The plates remaining are placed in the hands of particular men. They are guarded with care, and kept from being touched by women." He repeats the tradition that they had been derived from the Shawnee, which I also heard. It was supposed that they were handed down from above and given to the Shawnee who turned them over to the Ispokogi. Schoolcraft's reproductions of these plates agree substantially with those of Adair, except that the letters are placed nearer the center of the "shield," and the two black dots are shown clearly to have been intended for holes. They were based on information furnished by the Walter Lowrie above mentioned.[68]

A second account appears in the Appendix to the fifth volume of Schoolcraft contributed by the Creek missionary Loughridge, joint author of a dictionary of the Creek language. It is as follows:

TULLAHASSEE MISSION,
Creek Agency, W. Ark., 14th Sept., 1852.[69]

Having understood that the Tukkabachee town or clan of Creek Indians, were holding their annual festival, ("the green corn dance,") and that they would exhibit the much talked of "brass plates," I determined to examine them, and therefore proceeded to their town, and camped for the night, on the 7th of August, 1850.

Before daylight next morning, I was aroused by the singing, dancing and whooping, of the Indians, and was informed that the dance with the plates had commenced.

"On reaching the place, I found 200 or 300 men assembled in the Square, with fires burning to give them light. About 80 or 100 of them were formed into a procession, marching with a dancing step, double file, around their "stamping ground," which is about 240 feet in circumference. The procession was led by seven men, each of whom carried one of the plates with much solemnity of manner. After the dance was over, (which lasted about an hour,) I sent in my request for permission to inspect the plates.

"The old chief Tukkabachee Mikko, came out and said that I could see them, on condition that *I would not touch them.* They profess to believe, that if any person who has not been consecrated for the purpose, by fasting or other exercises, six or eight days, should touch them, he would certainly die, and sickness or some great calamity would befall the town. For similar reasons, he said it was unlawful

[68] Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. III, pp. 87-90. [69] Ibid., vol. V, p. 660.

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for a woman to look at them. The old chief then conducted me into the square, or public ground, where the plates had been laid out for my inspection. There were seven in all, three brass and four copper plates. 778.

"The brass plates are circular, very thin, and are, respectively about twelve, fourteen, and eighteen inches in diameter. The middle sized one has two letters (or rather a double letter) near its centre, about one-fourth of an inch in length; thus, Æ, very well executed, as if done by a stamp. This was the only appearance of writing which I could discern on any of them.

"The four copper plates (or strips) are from four to six inches in width, and from one and a half to two feet in length. There is nothing remarkable about them. Like the brass plates, they are very thin, and appear as if they had been cut out of some copper kettle or other vessel.

"The Indians cannot give any satisfactory account of any of these plates. They say that they have been handed down from father to son, for many generations past, as relics of great value, on account of the blessing supposed to be attached to the proper attention to them. They hold, that the health and prosperity of the town, depend in a great measure upon the proper observance of the rites connected with them. It is said, that this town is known to have had these plates in their possession for 200 years past.

"There has been much conjecture about the writing upon them. Some supposed that it was Hebrew, and hence concluded that they might be descendants of the Jews. I was, therefore, the more anxious to see the plates, and very particular in examining them. But I could discover no appearance of writing, and not a single letter, but the above mentioned Roman letters.

"Some have supposed the brass plates to be old shields. The largest one, (which I could not examine very closely), appeared more like the remains of a shield than any of them.

"But upon the whole, I am inclined to adopt the opinion given me by one of their dancers in the procession, that "*they appear to have been covers for pots, or for some other vessel, taken a great while ago from the Spaniards perhaps, in Florida.*"

"Yours truly,

R. M. LOUGHRIDGE."

Stiggins's account of them again brings in the Shawnee:

"It is related that once in times past, the Ispocoga and Shawanose tribes, made a resolution and formed a compact by which they were thereafter to consolidate their interests and the two tribes to be but one in future, and perform their yearly custom of Thanksgiving and other rites of religious ceremony as one people. For they at that [time] lived bordering on each other's Territory, the Shawanose in

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778 and about Savannah in the state of Georgia, therefore, in accordance with their compact, they deposited with the keepers of the national square of one of the tribes, their calumet tobacco pipes, belts, and war club called by them *Attussa*, with all their emblems of peace and friendship together with twelve pieces of brass described as follows: Six of them were oval of about eight inches long and seven in the widest part and the other six about nine inches long and four in width, made square, bearing a resemblance to the breast plates of ancient soldiers. They all belonged to the Ispocoga tribe, and were three of the oval and three of the square kind making six to a set when exhibited for they are never exhibited but in their fasting and feasting to commemorate the new corn crop. So they deposited two sets of the above plates in the national square according to compact, and the united tribes of Ispocoga and Shawanose performed their ceremonies together with concord for a length of time. But for some unknown reason or on account of some occurrence—the Ispocogas attributing it to the instable and fickle disposition of the Shawanose—the latter formed a resolution to secede from the union and national compact and remove. No remonstrance of the other tribes against it could alter their determination for they dissolved their union by emigrating northwardly, and when they moved they carried off six of the sacred brass plates, three oval and three of the square kinds, which the Shawanose have retained possession of ever since. They were seen by some Creeks first in the care of the old prophet at Tippacanoe about the time he fought Genl. Harrison and not long since they were still in his possession over the Mississippi, and seen by some Creek chiefs who visited that tribe, to whom they were exhibited with a traditional account of how they came into their possession with all its circumstances, which account agreed with the Ispocoga tradition of their loss." [70]

Although there are other incidental references to these plates, including several newspaper accounts of more or less value, the only one with which we need concern ourselves is that given by Tuggle and preserved among the ethnological papers in the Bureau of American Ethnology. I quote it entire:

"The Tookabatchees have in their possession certain copper or brass vessels, which their town has owned for generations . . .

"These sacred vessels consist of twelve pieces. The largest is circular in shape, about eighteen inches in diameter and has two holes near the center through which a string passes. Two other pieces are circular and about fifteen inches in diameter with two holes near the center. Nine other pieces are smaller, being twelve or fifteen inches long and six inches wide.

"The Tookabatchees give the following account of the origin of these vessels:

[70] Stiggins, Ms.

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" 'A long time ago Is-poke-o-goes, persons, came from Esar-kee-tum-mee-see, the Life Controller, Source of Life, and brought the vessels to us.' After staying some time one of the "Is-poke-o-gees" went back to Esarkee-tum-meesee. The other Ispokegee remained with our people. He was without beginning. He told us always to preserve these vessels and carry them wherever we went. He told us how to live and do right and tell the truth. He told us that after a while a great many white people would come from the east and drive us away, but always to carry these vessels and good luck would be with us, in hunting and in war. He told us that the Shawnees also had such vessels and some day they would unite with us and we would be one people.

" 'The Ispokeogee took the wrong medicine and died. Four days after he was buried, a beautiful white flower was seen growing on his grave and from this flower the Tookabatchees obtained their medicine (the wild tobacco), and keep it to this day.

" 'These vessels are kept buried under the town house and at the busk, or annual festival, they are unearthed, washed in a running stream, and rubbed by certain persons to whom they are entrusted, and they are used during the festival for certain ceremonies. When the festival is over the seed of their medicine is put with these sacred vessels, and they are returned to their hiding till the next annual busk.'

"Strangers can not look on these vessels except at the festival and it is claimed that should a stranger look on them at other times he would die before he reached his home."

In some notes made by Mr. G. W. Grayson after a visit to the Tukabahchee busk of 1917 occurs the following reference to these plates:

"The Indians declare they were given to them from on high at a very early period of their existence as a people, and attribute to them profound sacredness. From such information as I have been able to secure respecting these curious objects it would seem that some 70 or more years ago they were much more come-at-able, in other words that the custodians were more readily induced to permit them to be seen than in later times. I find that the present custodians appear to regard them with a degree of awe that is more pronounced than in earlier periods. It is asserted that these objects have not been disturbed or removed from their present inclosure for many years because, as it was explained, the old medicine men who by their powers of magic could handle them without detrimental consequences had all passed away. It seems to be firmly believed that should they now be taken out or handled by persons untaught in the mysteries and magic of the old medicine men of the past, dire results such as sickness in inordinate degrees of virulence, fatalities

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778 in the families of the town, destructive wind storms, and various other sinister phenomena would occur. So, when one was asked why they did not take the plates out and wash and brighten them up as was the early practice, the answer came promptly, 'Because there is none competent.' They must neither be handled nor touched by water lest great evils result. Moreover, they seem to speak of them with care and caution, closely bordering on fear, lest some evil befall them as a punishment for having spoken too freely of such sacred objects."

But some of these plates are now reported to be broken and parts lost, which is not to be wondered at, as for a long time they were kept in a box back of the miko's bed, along with the atasa carried by the women, exposed to any inquisitive passer-by not overblessed with scruples. In 1914, however, they were still held in the greatest esteem and fear by the leading Tukabahchee. The chief of the town at that time said he could never handle them without becoming sick, and when I drew outlines of the plates from my memory of Adair's figures he recommended that I tear them up and throw them away or ill would certainly befall me before I got home. The continued handling is supposed to drive one crazy. If some of these are brass, as stated by Adair and conceded by subsequent writers who have had a chance to examine the plates, the European origin of at least a portion of them is assured, and it is plainly indicated also by the letters, if they have been correctly copied. Barent Dubois, mentioned above in the quotation from Pickett, who is said by him to have "long lived among the Tookabatchas," believed that these plates owed their origin to De Soto and his companions.[71] There can be little reasonable doubt that they are of Spanish origin, but, as the Shawnee and "Kaskinampos"[72] were trading at St. Augustine in the latter part of the seventeenth century it is equally possible that they were obtained there at that period. They share with certain objects among the Plains tribes in a veneration bestowed upon European articles when they first made their appearance, and which they would certainly have failed to elicit at a later time after that familiarity had developed that "breeds contempt."

THE FATE OF SOULS

775 776 According to Adair the good spirits of the world above attend and favor the virtuous while the bad spirits in the west accompany and have power over the vicious,[73] but this probably gives a somewhat distorted view of the actual native belief. It is probable that the good spirits of which he speaks included most of those who became human helpers, whether in the sky or in other parts of the universe,

[71] Pickett, Hist. Ala., p. 86. [72] See Bull. 73, Bur. Amer. Ethn., p. 214. [73] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 26.

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[Descriptions and diagrams of Creek town squares and square-ground buildings are filed in category 344]